



The Patronal Feast of the Holy Monastery of Sts. Cyprian and Justina, Phyle, Athens October 2, 2017 (Old Style)

The Divine Founder of the Church granted yet again this year to the pious pilgrims honoring the Holy and glorious Martyrs Cyprian and Justina a breath of springtime in autumn, both physical and spiritual: the splendid Patronal Feast of the Monastery dedicated to these Saints in Phyle, Athens.



Since 1979, the Monastery has served as the Headquarters of the Holy Metropolis of Oropos and Phyle, belonging to the Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians of Greece.

As the commemoration of the Saints fell this year on a Sunday, the message of the Resurrection was commingled with that of repentance and confession in the hymns of the Feast.

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On Saturday afternoon, Great Resurrectional Vespers was chanted in the Cathedral, with His Grace, Bishop Ambrose of Methone presiding, at the invitation of the Ruling Hierarch, His Eminence, Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Phyle, whose Nameday it was.



Officiating together with them were His Eminence, Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Attica and Boiotia, Their Graces, Bishops Sofronie

of Suceava and Dionisie of Galați (from the True Orthodox Church of Romania, under His Eminence, Metropolitan Vlasie), and His Grace, Bishop Klemes of Gardikion.



Also participating in Vespers were the Reverend Abbot of the Monastery, Archimandrite Father Theodosios, and clergy from our Holy Synod in Greece, Sardinia, and Sweden, as well as from our Sister Church of Romania.

A great many monks and nuns, joined by a throng of devout pilgrims—among them a small contingent from Sweden—were in prayerful attendance.

The Monastery choir, under the direction of Hieromonk Father Dionysios Hagiokyprianites, chanted with festal solemnity.





● **B**efore the Dismissal, His Grace, Bishop Ambrose delivered a festal homily, in which he spoke about *active repentance as a common characteristic of the Life of St. Cyprian and of the monastic life, as well as being the special calling of the Holy Monastery to the youth, in accordance with the vow made by its Founder and first Abbot, Metropolitan Cyprian of blessed memory (†May 17, 2013).*

With the aid of several passages from the great preacher of repentance, St. John Chrysostomos, His Grace described the power of repentance, in which the faithful find ***“the medicine for salvation, boldness before God, a weapon against the Devil, hope of salvation, and the abolishment of despair.”***



Bishop Ambrose went on to describe the ***way*** of repentance: self-reproach, confession, our “change” of “mind” (μετα-νοῶ), thinking, and way of life, and sorrow in Christ over our own wickedness and that of the world.

St. Cyprian put such creative repentance into practice, as does every true monastic, and this call to repentance is what imparts to the faithful the special Grace of the Monastery of our Saints.



The reliquary containing portions of the Relics of Sts. Cyprian and Justina,

which is normally kept in the Monastery cloister, was brought to the Cathedral so that throughout Vespers, and again the following day, the faithful had the opportunity to venerate them.

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On Sunday morning, October 2 (Old Style) Orthros for the Resurrection and the Martyrs was celebrated, followed by the festal Hierarchical Divine Liturgy.

His Eminence, Metropolitan Cyprian was the principal celebrant, as His Beatitude, Archbishop Kallinikos was unable to attend.

Concelebrating were Their Eminences, Metropolitan Gerontios of Piræus and Salmis, Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Attica and Boiotia, and Metropolitan Photios of Demetrias, Their Graces, Bishop Sofronie of Suceava and Bishop Dionisie of Galați (from Romania), and Their Graces, Bishop Ambrose of Methone and Bishop Klemes of Gardikion. Dozens of Priests and Deacons also took part in the service.

A large throng of faithful and many dignitaries filled the Church and courtyard of the Monastery, where an atmosphere of prayerful stillness and reverence held sway.

● **Before Holy Communion**, His Eminence, Metropolitan Photios of Demetrias delivered an inspired festal sermon. *Referring to the Life of the Saints, he explained what magic is, emphasizing that there is not white (good) magic and black (evil) magic, but that all forms of magic constitute worship and invocation of the unclean spirits.*

Metropolitan Photios lauded the twofold mission of the Monastery, which not only provides relief from demonic activity and guidance in the way of repentance and the ethos





of the Gospel, but also plays a leading role in the defence of the Faith and the struggle against the panheresy of Ecumenism.

His Eminence then expressed a prayerful wish for the eternal repose of the Monastery's founder, Metropolitan Cyprian of blessed memory, and that his protection and blessing ever safeguard the Abbot and Brotherhood of the Monastery.

Finally, personally and on behalf of the Holy Synod, Metropolitan Photios wished our Most Reverend Archpastor, on the occasion of his Nameday, that he be granted many years to shepherd the flock entrusted to him and to offer to the Holy Synod his invaluable ministry.

With compunction and good order, many of the faithful approached the Cup of Life for Holy Communion.

After the Dismissal, Metropolitan Cyprian thanked the Hierarchs representing the Church of Romania, the Hierarchs of our Holy Synod, all of the clergy, those who toiled in the preparations for this splendid Feast Day, and first and foremost the Abbot of the Monastery, Archimandrite Father Theodosios, the representatives of the local government—in particular, the Mayor of Phyle, Mr. Christos Pappous and his colleagues—and of the Greek Parliament, as well as all of the pious worshipers who came from various regions of our homeland and abroad to celebrate the memory of the



Saints together with the spiritual family attached to the Monastery of Sts. Cyprian and Justina.

His Eminence also expressed a prayerful wish for the eternal memory and repose of Metropolitan





Cyprian of Oropos and Phyle, to whom, as he said, we owe “everything we had, everything we have, and everything we will have.”

There followed the customary procession of the Holy Icon and the Relics of the Saints, after which the Blessing of the Loaves was celebrated in the Monastery courtyard next to the Church, at the end of which everyone spontaneously sang “Eternal Memory” for the ever-memorable Metropolitan Cyprian, who remains alive in our hearts.



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A reception followed in the Monastery’s guest-hall, where brief festal greetings were offered by His Grace, Bishop Dionisie of Galați, on behalf of the Romanians, and by His Eminence, Metropolitan Gerontios of Piræus and Salamis—who invited everyone to the Feast Day of St. Ieronymos of Aegina the following day—as well as by the Mayor of Phyle, Mr. Pappous.

Our Most Reverend Metropolitan thanked all those present, as well as all those who were absent, and expressed his special gratitude to the Reverend Mother Eupraxia, Abbess of the Convent of the Panagia Myrtidiotissa in Aphidnai, Attica, for the beautiful Icon painted for him at her convent, on which, as His Eminence pointed out with emphasis, was depicted the *prototype* that he con-



stantly keeps in mind as he performs his hierarchical ministry: the washing of the feet of the Disciples.

In the monastery cloister, the customary festal meal was served to the Hierarchs, the clergy, the Mayor of Phyle and his colleagues, and many of the male pilgrims, while mementos and refreshments were distributed to the rest of the faithful.



The unexpected arrival of His Beatitude, Archbishop Kalinikos immediately after the monastic Trapeza was an especially pleasant and touching surprise, which provided an opportunity for a group photograph and for everyone to take his paternal blessing.

Until nightfall, crowds of pilgrims came to the Monastery to receive the blessing and grace of our Saints.

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Once again, our Lord and Savior, Who is glorified in His Saints, worked His miracle and granted us a splendid Feast Day that was replete with prayerful Grace and characterized by inter-Orthodox love, confession, and unity, to the glory of God and Sts. Cyprian and Justina, and also the strengthening and gladness of the pious pilgrims.

Glory to God for all things! Holy Trinity, glory to Thee!

